



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OPERATION ICE STORM
**JOPLIN MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO ROLE
MULTI-KILO METH CONSPIRACY**

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Joplin, Mo., man pleaded guilty in federal court today to his role in a conspiracy to distribute between five and 15 kilograms of methamphetamine. Today's guilty plea, Graves said, is a result of Operation Ice Storm, a long-term investigation into the illegal distribution of large quantities of methamphetamine in southwest Missouri.

Ronald D. Preston, 34, of Joplin, pleaded guilty before U.S. Magistrate Judge James C. England this morning.

By pleading guilty, **Preston** admitted that he conspired with others to distribute between five and 15 kilograms of methamphetamine between August 2002 and Sept. 20, 2004, in Jasper County, Mo.

Under federal statutes, **Preston** may be subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in federal prison without parole, up to life in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$4 million.

Preston was originally charged in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on Oct. 14, 2004, in Springfield, Mo.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Robyn L. McKee. The case was investigated by the Jasper County Drug Task Force, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Joplin, Mo., Police Department, the Carthage, Mo., Police Department, the Jasper County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, the Jasper County, Mo., Metropolitan Police Department, the Carterville, Mo., Police Department, the Newton County, Mo., Sheriff's

Department, the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the Central Oklahoma Metro Interdiction Team and the Texas Department of Public Safety.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow